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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IR](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN: REPRESENTATIVE HARMAN'S FEBRUARY 20 MEETING
WITH ISRAELI DEPUTY DEFMIN SNEH

REF: A. TEL AVIV 559
[1](#)B. TEL AVIV 542

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

[1](#)1. (S) During a February 20 meeting with Representative Jane Harman (D-CA), Israeli Deputy DefMin Ephraim Sneh said that he believes that the installation of a pro-American, secular, democratic government in Iran can be far more easily accomplished than many observers think. Saying that regime change from within is by far the cheapest and most reliable of the options being considered by those seeking to limit Iran's influence in the world, Sneh claimed that it could be effected with 400-500 million USD, the co-operation of the British government, and a focused U.S. foreign policy.

[1](#)2. (S) Sneh claimed that large segments of the Iranian populace would support the overthrow of the mullahs, and would go to the streets themselves if given the right impetus. These segments include students, women, and disaffected ethnic groups, including Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, and Azeris, who increasingly look to Baku rather than Tehran for leadership. Sneh said that the U.S. should talk to anyone in favor of regime change, most notably Prince Pahlavi, outlawed groups such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), and human rights organizations within Iran. (Comment: The Ambassador pointed out the impossibility of USG contact with the MEK, as they are on the DOS state-sponsored terror list, and many are in U.S. custody in Iraq. End comment.)

[1](#)3. (S) Expressing his frustration with what he said was the continued courting of Tehran by certain European states, the Russians, and the Chinese, Sneh said that the only sanctions that could pass muster with the international community would be those so feeble as to permit Iran's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons. The U.S. would be better served by foregoing broad international consensus and choosing a few partners -- partners willing to implement tough, targeted sanctions that could drive a wedge between Tehran and its citizens and increase frustration in the street.

[1](#)4. (S) On the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Sneh stated that the U.S. must continue to try to strengthen the hand of Palestinian President Abu Mazen, and that U.S. wisdom, money, and political will could bring about an agreement with Israel that will permanently tip the political balance in the Palestinian territories in Fatah's favor. He expressed his view that the Secretary is "on the right track" with respect to the conflict, and expressed appreciation for all of her efforts.

[1](#)5. (U) Representative Harman did not have an opportunity to review this cable.

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JONES